

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-10

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FOR NEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EG, LY, US

SUBJ: LIBYA-US: LIBYAN POLICIES AND L-100'S

REF: STATE 149531, TRIPOLI 0853, TRIPOLI 230, TRIPOLI 264

1. A US-LIBYAN DIALOGUE IS NOT LIKELY TO RESULT IN MODIFICATION OF LIBYA'S MIDDLE EAST STANCE TO ANY GREATER EXTENT THAN QADHAFI'S DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIETS AND YUGOSLAVS HAVE ALREADY HAD A MODERATING EFFECT. I DO, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT QADHAFI MAY HAVE FOUND SOME OF HIS TERRORIST TACTICS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, AND WE MAY BE ABLE TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO MODIFY HIS INVOLVEMENT.

2. IN ADDITION OUR VIEWS ON LIBYAN POLICIES ON MIDDLE EAST AND TOWARDS TERRORISM CONTAINED TRIPOLI 264 AND WHAT SECRETARIAT FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL HAS TOLD US OF LIBYAN POSITION (TRIPOLI 230), SEVERAL OF MY ARAB COLLEAGUES HERE TELL ME THAT PLO ACCEPTS QADHAFI'S ASSURANCES TO ARAFAT THAT LIBYA WILL NOT TRY TO BLOCK PLO GOING TO GENEVA. QADHAFI CLEARLY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT

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GENEVA OFFERS ANY HOPE FOR ARABS. AT SAME TIME HE STANDS READY TO EXPLOIT THE FAILURE OF MEPC, WHICH HE FULLY EXPECTS, AND NO DOUBT HOPES MODERATE ARAB GOVERNMENTS WILL BE REPLACED BY MILITANT ONES MORE TO HIS TASTE AS RESULT. IN INTERIM, QADHAFI WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY LEND SOME SUPPORT TO SOME REJECTIONISTS -- IF ONLY TO KEEP HIS HARDLINE CREDENTIALS IN ORDER.

3. LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR OR INVOLVEMENT IN TERRORISM IS
EQUALLY THORNY. GENERAL APPROAHCES TO LIBYA ON
SUBJECT IMMEDIATELY LEAD TO DEFINITIAONL DISPUTE.
SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS AND AFRICANS THEY SAY IS NOT
TERRORISM. THEY WILL ALSO ASK ABOUT US SUPPORT FOR
EX-TERRORIST NOW RULING ISRAEL.

4. MOREOVER, LIBYA CLAIMS TO OPPOSE HIJACKING AND HARM
TO INNOCENT PEOPLE AND STANDS READY TO DISCUSS PROBLEM
IN UN. IN SUM WE DOUBT IF QADHAFI REGIME WILL EVER CLOSE
DOWN PALESTINIAN/AFRICAN TRAINING FACILITIES AND
SUPPORT FOR "LIBERATION MOVEMENTS" IN AREA. SAME,
OF COURSE, CAN BE SAID ABOUT OTHER MORE MODERATE ARAB
STATES. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS CLEAR THAT LIBYAN GOVERN-
MENT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED IN PAST YEAR
OVER TERRORIST IMAGE. IN DE BOURCHGRAVE INTERVIEW
(SEPT 1976) HE SUGGESTED INTELLIGENCE SERVICES SOME-
TIMES GET OUT OF HAND AND NEED TO BE RESTRAINED. IN
PAST MONTHS OTHER LIBYAN OFFICIALS AND MEDIA STRESS
DISTINCTION BETWEEN TERRORISM AND LEGITIMATE SUPPORT
FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. THUS, WE BELIEVE LIBYANS ARE
SENSITIVE AND VULNERABLE ON SUBJECT. WHILE GENERAL
DENUNCIATION BY US NOT LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE, VERY
SPECIFIC, WELL-DOCUMENTED CHARGES AT HIGH LEVEL COULD
HAVE SOME EFFECT.

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5. ON L-100 PROBLEM, I THINK AT MINIMUM WE SHOULD ASK
LIBYANS JUST WHAT SORT OF ASSURANCES THEY CAN GIVE US
THAT THESE AIRCRAFT WOULD BE USED TO MEET LIBYA'S
RECOGNIZED NEED FOR COMMERCIAL AIR CARGO CAPACITY
AND THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE USED FOR MILITARY TRANSPORT.
UNTIL THEN, WE MUST ASSUME THAT THESE AIRCRAFT, IN
ADDITION MEETING COMMERCIAL NEEDS, AT LEAST MARGINALLY
ADD TO LIBYA'S MILITARY OR DISRUPTIVE CAPABILITY.
ALSO, WE SHOULD NOT GRANT APPROVAL EXCEPT IN CONTEXT
SOME POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.

6. LIBYANS ARE CURRENTLY EXPANDING AIRFIELD FACILITIES
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IN SOUTHEAST, KUFRA RUNWAYS CAN
CURRENTLY HANDLE 747'S, IF ASSOCIATED FACILITIES
AVAILABLE. WE HEAR ANOTHER AIRFIELD IS PLANNED AT
JABAL UWAYNAT, NEAR EGYPTIAN/SUDANESE BORDERS. ALSO,
NEW AIRFIELD IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT GHAT,
NEAR ALGERIAN BORDER. EMBOFF RECENTLY VISITED LATTER
PROJECT AND WAS TOLD 4 KILOMETER LONG RUNWAY SHOULD
BE COMPLETED WITHIN ONE YEAR. FUEL TRANSPORT
DEFICIENCIES, LIMITED ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE,

SHORTAGE TRAINED CREWS ARE ADDITIONAL FACTORS
LIMITING USEFULNESS L-100'S FOR EITHER COMMERCIAL OR
MILITARY USE AT THESE REMOTE AREAS OF LIBYA FOR AT
LEAST NEXT THREE YEARS.

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